

SENATE—Monday, April 19, 1999

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Gracious Father, this is a day for rejoicing over the manifold good things You have given us. Help us to take nothing and no one for granted. As we move through this day, help us to savor the sheer wonder of being alive. Thank You for giving us the ability to think, understand, and receive Your guidance. We praise You for the people You have placed in our lives. Help us to appreciate the never-to-be-repeated miracle of each personality.

We are grateful for the challenges we have before us which compel us to depend on You more. Thank You, too, for opportunities that are beyond our ability to fulfill so that we may be forced to trust You for wisdom and strength. We rejoice over Your daily interventions to help us; we even rejoice in our problems, for they allow You to show us Your power to provide solutions. Free us to rejoice in the privilege of new discoveries.

In all things, great and small, we rejoice in You, gracious Lord of all! Through the indwelling presence and inspiring power of our Savior and Lord. Amen.

**RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING
MAJORITY LEADER**

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, for the leader, I would like to give this information. It is for all Senators. The Senate will be in a period of morning business until 2 p.m. Following morning business, the Senate may begin consideration of S. 531, a bill to authorize a congressional gold medal for Rosa Parks. If this legislation is cleared for action, a vote will occur at 5:30 p.m. We will notify all Senators of an exact voting schedule when that information becomes available.

Also, Senators may expect to consider any legislative or executive items cleared for action.

The majority leader would like to, again, remind all Senators that there will be no session of the Senate Friday, April 23. He thanks all of our colleagues for their attention.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. AL-LARD). Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 2 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

INHALANTS AND GHB

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I speak often about the threat that illegal drugs pose to our young people. Today, I want to address a serious problem from substances common in virtually every home in the country. There are several trends in substance abuse among young people that are happening literally under our noses. I want to address two substances that receive little attention but cause much pain and suffering. Most people are not familiar with the harms of either of these substances. However, our familiarity with and attention to these lethal substances is well overdue. The subject is: inhalants and GHB.

Inhalants are among the scariest substance being abused by teenagers today. Why? Because, kids have to go no further than their own kitchen cabinets to find them. Inhalants are everyday household products such as hair spray, cleaning fluids, air-fresheners, and whipped cream. More than 1,000 common household products have the potential to be abused. Kids are sniffing these easily obtainable household products to get a cheap high. In many cases, inhalants are used as an alternative to alcohol, clearly because young people don't have to break any laws to get them. Some see abuse of inhalants as a childish phase or youthful experimenting, but let me assure you "inhalant abuse" is deadly serious.

Inhalants kill hundreds of children each year. Since July of 1996, over 250 children have died from intentionally ingesting toxic fumes. Inhalants rank fourth among the substances abused by teens ages twelve to seventeen. Only alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana rank higher. In fact, inhalant abuse has gotten so bad that it is now considered a gateway drug. Like other gateway drugs, about one in five teens will try "sniffing" before they graduate. What is even more astounding is that inhalant abuse is a problem with children as young as eight; those in second grade.

Unfortunately, many do not acknowledge the severity of inhalant abuse until it is too late. A recent tragedy in a Philadelphia suburb demonstrated the lethal effects of inhalants when five sixteen-year-old girls were killed in a car accident. The coroner found that four of the five, including the driver, had ingested significant amounts of computer keyboard cleaner. Sadly, the girls were out shopping for dresses for a prom they will never attend.

The problem is that too many of us are unaware of the dangers of inhalants. According to a 1997 National Household Survey on Drugs, nine out of ten parents don't believe their children have ever abused inhalants. But surveys indicate that almost a half-a-million teens abuse inhalants every month. In fact, of those parents who do talk to their kids about drugs, less than half address inhalant abuse. Why aren't we talking about a substance that starves the brain of oxygen to the point of suffocation? Why aren't we warning our kids that these household products can cause damage to the brain and nervous system? We can't expect a teenager to know the severity of sniffing unless we tell them.

We need to alert parents and kids to the dangers of inhalants. This is the reason Congress named the week of March 21 through March 27 as "National Inhalants and Poisons Awareness Week". It is evident to me that this kind of recognition is imperative to reducing inhalant abuse. We cannot lock up our kids. We cannot keep many items with the potential for abuse out of the world our young people inhabit. What we can and must do is to exercise more responsibility and pay closer attention.

Another substance that is consuming our youth is GHB. If you aren't familiar with this drug, it may be because there is little information available on its fatal effects. In fact, GHB was sold over the counter as a dietary supplement in health food stores until 1990. Today, advocates of GHB believe the drug is harmless and should continue to be sold over the counter. Unfortunately, a person doing research on the drug will find more information supporting the use of GHB rather than reporting the realistic effects of the drug. For this reason, GHB continues to be sold as a recreational drug and perceived as harmless. These perceptions have proved deadly for many.

GHB has become popular at parties known as "Raves". These all-night parties glamorize the use of drugs and alcohol. "Ravers" are taking GHB to feel